

## THE WILL OF GOD

By Janet Galligan

David says in **Psalm 40:8**, *“I delight to do Your will, O my God.”* This is probably the desire of many of us; to know the will of God and to be walking in the will of God. In this teaching we are going to look into the Scripture to get a fuller understanding of what the will of God is for us and how that is outworked in our lives.

### Pray for God’s will to be done

In **Matthew 6:10** and in **Luke 11:2** when Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray, He says to pray *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* This is a powerful prayer exercising kingdom authority. Jesus is instructing His disciples to pray for the will of God to be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

To desire His will to be done requires total death to our own will or what we think should be done. Jesus demonstrated this for us in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed, *“O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done”* **Matt.26:42**.

### Jesus came to do the Father’s will

Jesus came to the earth not seeking to do His own will, but the will of the one who sent Him. *“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear I judge, and My judgement is righteous because I do not seek My own will, but the Father who sent Me”* **Jn.5:30**. Again in **John 6:38** Jesus said, *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”*

Jesus said that to do the will of the Father was as food to Him: *“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work”* **Jn.4:34**.

### What was the Father’s will for Jesus?

Jesus was clear about what the Father’s will was for Him. In **John 6:39** He says, *“This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.”* He went on to say in verse 40, *“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”* It was the Father’s will for people to be saved by Jesus coming to the earth.

The Scripture confirms in **1Timothy 2:4**, that Jesus came in the will of God to be the Mediator through whom men could be saved. God *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”*. This is confirmed again in **Matthew 18:14** when Jesus said, *“Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”*

It was the Father’s will for Jesus to manifest in the earth as the Son of God so that those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, might believe in Him and received everlasting life.

*Jesus came from the Father for a purpose and He did the Father’s will. He is the pattern for us to follow. He wants us also to know the Father’s will and obey the Father’s will in our lives.*

### **Those who do the Father’s will enter the kingdom**

Jesus said, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven”* **Matt.7:21**.

In **Matthew 21:28-31** Jesus is speaking about those who will enter the kingdom of God. He is telling the parable of the two sons to illustrate this. The first son said he would not go to work in the vineyard when he was asked by his father, but later regretted it and went. The second son said he would go but did not. Jesus asked the question, *“Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.”* Jesus is looking for those who will do His will, the will of the Father.

### **Punishment for those who know the Father’s will and do not do it**

In **Luke 12:42-48** Jesus is speaking to His disciples about the faithful steward/servant. He commends the faithful servant who is ruling well over his master’s household, but then he goes on to say of that same servant who acted unfaithfully: *“That servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”*

### **Relationship with Jesus**

To do the Father’s will brings us into relationship with Jesus. When His own natural mother and brothers came to call Him, Jesus *“stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother’”* **Matt.12:49-50**.

## Knowing God's will

To do the Father's will, we need to know His will. God actually desires for us to know His will! When Ananias commissioned Saul, who became Paul, he said ***"The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will"***(Acts 22:14).

How can we come to know what His will is? By asking! We can ask God to reveal His will to us. ***"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"*** Col.1:9-10.

We can pray for ourselves and for others to know His will. This is wisdom for us. Paul tells us in **Ephesians 5:15**, ***"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise"*** and goes on to say ***"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is"*** (v.17). The wise person is the one who understands what the will of God is.

### What is God's will for us?

**1)** It is good, acceptable and perfect. After Paul has beseeched us to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, he tell us to ***"not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"*** Romans 12:2.

**2)** It is God's will for us to be sanctified. ***"For this is the will of God, your sanctification"*** (1Thess.4:3). **Hebrews 10:5-10** is showing us how Christ's death fulfils God's will. By Jesus being obedient to the will of God and becoming the sin offering for us, through His death on the cross, we have been sanctified. ***"Then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"*** v.9-10 God has done everything that was necessary, in sending Jesus to ensure that His will for us, to be sanctified, would come to pass. We simply have to agree with His will for us, because He has promised us in **1 Thessalonians 5:23**, that the God of peace Himself will ***"sanctify you completely"*** and that your whole spirit, soul and body will be ***"preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."***

**3)** It is God's will for us to receive the adoption as sons. **Ephesians 1:5** says we have been ***"predestined to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according the good pleasure of His will."*** This adoption comes at the age of maturity, no longer being children, no longer young men and women serving a master, but being placed into sonship, whereby we begin to walk in our inheritance.

4) It is God's will for us to come to perfection. Paul wrote to the brethren in Colossae that *"Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"* Col.4:12.

5) It is God's will for us to be delivered from this evil age. Paul tells us in **Galatians 1:4** that the Lord Jesus *"gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."*

6) It is God's will for us to be thankful people. *"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"* 1Thess.5:18.

7) It is God's will for us to understand the deeper mysteries of the word of God. The apostle Paul encourages us in **Ephesians 1** that one of the spiritual blessings we have received from *"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (v.3), is that He has *"made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself"* (v.9).

8) It is God's will for us not to be deceived by false doctrines. Jesus Himself said in **John 7:16-17** *"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority."* If we will to do His will, then He has promised that we will know the true doctrine, and not come under deception.

### **Knowing and walking in the will of God was a key aspect of the early church**

The apostle Paul knew he was an apostle by the will of God, as this is the way he introduces himself in a number of his letters. *"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God"* 1Cor.1:1 [also 2Cor.1; Eph.1:1; Col.1:1].

In **Romans 1:10** Paul was sharing how he was longing to be with the brethren in Rome and that he was praying that *"by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you."* Paul knew that if it was the will of God for him, then a way would be made for him to go to Rome to see the brethren.

Again later in this letter to the Romans, Paul pleads with the brethren to *"strive together with me in prayers to God ... that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you"* Rom.15:30-32. Paul's longing to be with them was subject to the will of God.

In Paul's letter to the church in Corinth he speaks of the grace on the churches of Macedonia. These churches had been in much affliction and were in deep poverty (2Cor.8:2), yet they freely gave to Paul. Paul commends these ones as being obedient to the will of God. *"And not only as we had hoped, but they first give themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God"* v.5.

In the **Acts 21** Paul and his team were journeying back to Jerusalem, and they came to the house of Philip the evangelist. Here they met the prophet Agabus, who prophesied that Paul would be bound and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles (**v.8-11**). The brethren sought to dissuade him, but finally when they saw that Paul would not change his mind, they said, *“The will of the Lord be done”* **v.14**. Paul had already shared that he was ready *“not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus”* **v.13**. Therefore the brethren realised that they all needed to submit to the perfect will of God.

We need to be willing to lay down our own will and humbly submit to the Father’s will for our lives. The apostle James gives a short teaching on this in **James 4:13-15**. He teaches we are not to presumptuously say *“Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city”*, we should humbly say, *“If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that”* **v.15**.

### **Other aspects of the will of God**

- **Do the will of God from the heart**

Paul teaches us that we should serve as to Christ, not to please men, *“but as bondservants of*

*Christ, doing the will of God from the heart”* (**Eph.6:6**). Not just serving in a pessimistically resigned way, but from the heart.

- **We are to live for the will of God**

Peter exhorts us that we *“no longer should live the rest of our time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God”*(**1Pet.4:2**).

- **We may suffer for doing the will of God**

Peter also says, *“Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator”* **1Pet.4:19**. For that reason we need endurance, *“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise”* **Heb.10:36**.

- **The promise**

*“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us, and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him”* **1Jn.5:14-15**.

*“And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever”* **1Jn.2:17**.

## **God's desire for us**

God's desire is for us to do His will, and He has done what is necessary to enable us to do it.

*“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead,*

*that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will,*

*working in you what is well pleasing in His sight,*

*through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”*

**Hebrews 13:20-21.**